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San Jose Mercury News, File 634 (Jun 1985 - present)

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L2	hertz and club and gold and bypass and counter

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02566268 ? ?Supplier Number: 63283173

Hertz Announces New, Elite Levels for #1 **Club Gold** Members in the US - Revamps its #1 **Club** Membership with Free Upgrade to #1 **Club Gold** Service -.

PR Newswire , p NA

July 11 , 2000

Language: English ? **Record Type:** Fulltext**Document Type:** Newswire ; Trade**Word Count:** 995**Text:**

PARK RIDGE, N.J., July 11 /PRNewswire/ --

Today, The **Hertz** Corporation (NYSE: HRZ), the world's largest car rental company, announced a new, three tiered program for its top level #1 **Club Gold** members in the U.S. Also, **Hertz** has revamped its long-standing, free #1 **Club** service, which offers members an automatic invitation to move up to #1 **Club Gold** after completing four rentals. The three levels for its premier expedited service program are now #1 **Club Gold**, #1 **Club Gold** Five Star and #1 **Club Gold** President's Circle. The new service levels will provide increasing incentives for more frequent rental activity.

In 1972, **Hertz** became the first car rental company to recognize the strategic value of maintaining a customer profile database, with the introduction of **Hertz** #1 **Club**. The service created a

data file for each customer, by maintaining driver's license information, home address, car class information and credit card information for instant recall. For **Hertz'** customers, #1 **Club** helped reduce time spent making reservations and sped the process when renting a car. **Hertz** #1 **Club** is a free service available to all **Hertz** customers.

Hertz has enhanced the benefits of #1 **Club** service by allowing existing and new members to earn free membership in **Hertz** #1 **Club Gold** service. Upon completion of four rentals, #1 **Club** members will be invited to join #1 **Club Gold** and be eligible for Five Star and President's Circle, depending on rental activity. In addition, #1 **Club** members who rent a minimum of four times annually can avoid the \$50 annual fee for #1 **Club Gold** membership.

After implementing #1 **Club** service, **Hertz** recognized the additional customer benefit to not only keeping an active profile on customers, but also allow customers to bypass the counter altogether, with the keys and completed rental agreement ready and waiting for them.

So in 1989, **Hertz** became the first car rental company to offer customers a premier, expedited rental service with preassigned vehicles sheltered under weather-protected canopies. With **Hertz** #1 **Club Gold**, members have no rental agreements to sign and simply arrive at **Hertz** locations, with the car ready to go.

"We developed #1 **Club Gold** with the frequent renter in mind. The service incorporates those elements that are most important to them: protection from the weather; a fast, problem-free rental and personalized attention. #1 **Club Gold** customers receive a level of service unsurpassed within the car rental industry," said Brian J. Kennedy, Executive Vice President, Marketing and Sales for **Hertz**.

Today, **Hertz** serves millions of #1 **Club Gold** members at locations around the globe, including Asia Pacific, Canada, Europe and the U.S. Also, enrollment in #1 **Club Gold** is available in more than 100 countries worldwide, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico and Singapore.

"Our #1 **Club Gold** membership continues to grow and both small and large business customers recognize the value of utilizing the service. Given our commitment to exceeding customer expectations, we are offering these new levels for the program to recognize **Hertz'** best customers with enhanced benefits and service," said Kennedy. "In addition to rewarding **Hertz'** high- volume renters, we are encouraging all #1 **Club Gold** members to earn their way to Five Star and President's Circle levels through increased rental activity. Both existing and new #1 **Club** members can also obtain higher status."

In addition to benefiting from **Hertz'** expedited rental and return process, #1 **Club Gold** members can earn higher program status with increased rental activity, ultimately becoming a #1 **Club Gold** Five Star or #1 **Club Gold** President's Circle member. Upon completion of 10 or more rentals within a 12-month period, customers are eligible for the Five Star level. At this level, customers receive with each rental, a complimentary one-car class upgrade based upon availability, coupon offers with greatly reduced blackout dates and a Free Rental Day Certificate after every 20 rentals.

At the end of each calendar year, members' rental activity will be evaluated and, with a higher level of rentals, Five Star members will qualify for #1 **Club Gold** President's Circle.

#1 **Club Gold** President's Circle is for **Hertz'** most loyal and frequent customers. Customers are eligible to attain President's Circle status after completing 40 or more rentals within a 12-month period. This level provides guaranteed availability of a vehicle,

with a two-hour minimum advance reservation, a guaranteed upgrade, (midsize and above reserved) and a vehicle parked in a specially designated President's Circle parking place that is closest to the vehicle pick up location in the #1 Club Gold area in major airports.

In addition, President's Circle members receive a 25% bonus on #1 Awards Points, Free Rental Day Certificates that are earned by rental activity and a birthday gift of 500 frequent flyer miles or #1 Awards points.

"With these new levels and enhancements, we are thanking our most loyal customers for their patronage of **Hertz**," said Kennedy.

Beginning later this month, existing #1 **Club Gold** members will start receiving details on the new levels. Initial inclusion in the Five Star and President's Circle is based upon rental volume in 1999. New members will be added each calendar year. In addition, customers will receive ongoing customer mailings featuring special offers from **Hertz** as well as from **Hertz**' travel industry partners and information about new products and services introduced by **Hertz**.

"With the new multi-level program, we are once again leading the car rental industry by initiating a program that is unmatched by our competitors," said Kennedy. "As with the introduction of **Gold**, we are confident that the program will receive praise from our most valued customers: #1 **Club Gold** members -- and help us to gain new ones as well."

By visiting **hertz.com**, customers may enroll in both **Hertz** #1 **Club** and #1 **Club Gold**.

Also, the website provides #1 **Club Gold** terms and conditions in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Hertz operates a fleet of 525,000 vehicles from approximately 6,500 locations in more than 140 countries.

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Publisher Name: PR Newswire Association, Inc.

Company Names: ***Hertz Corp.**

Geographic Names: *1USA (United States)

Product Names: *7510000 (Motor Vehicle Rent & Lease)

Industry Names: BUS (Business, General); BUSN (Any type of business)

SIC Codes: 7510 (Automotive Rentals, No Drivers)

NAICS Codes: 5231 (Securities and Commodity Contracts Intermediation and Brokerage)
